



THE RANCHO LEVELS OF COGNITIVE FUNCTIONING

COGNITIVE LEVEL I – No Response
Unresponsive to all stimuli.

COGNITIVE LEVEL II – Generalized Response
Nonspecific responses (e.g. increased respiratory rate, blood pressure, moaning, large body movements) in response to sensory stimuli.

COGNITIVE LEVEL III – Localized Response
Simple specific reactions emerge (e.g. turns toward sound, withdraws from pain, watches movement). Follows basic commands inconsistently and with delays.

COGNITIVE LEVEL IV – Confused, Agitated
Disoriented, with limited ability to attend to and understand present events. Attention span is brief. Demonstrates inappropriate, restless, aggressive or flight behavior. Maximum assistance is required to participate in simple self-care activities.

COGNITIVE LEVEL V – Confused, Inappropriate, Nonagitated

Appears alert and responds to simple commands; needs step by step help to perform simple familiar tasks.

COGNITIVE LEVEL VI – Confused, Appropriate

Behavior is goal-directed. Emerging awareness of self, family and basic needs. Highly distractible with significant difficulty learning new information.

COGNITIVE LEVEL VII – Automatic, Appropriate

Oriented and performs familiar daily activities, but is highly dependent on routine. Residual cognitive deficits (attention, memory, problem solving, etc.) interfere with ability to safely manage varied and unfamiliar situations. Requires supervision for safety.

COGNITIVE LEVEL VIII – Purposeful, Appropriate

Recalls and integrates past and recent events. Learns new skills, although problems with memory, stress tolerance and executive functions persist. Uses some compensatory strategies independently. May continue to over or underestimate abilities.

Hagen, C., Malkmus, D., Durham, P. (1979). Levels of cognitive functioning, *Rehabilitation of the Head Injured Adult; Comprehensive Physical Management*, Downey, CA: Professional Staff Association of Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center.

For further information, please call Rancho at 1-877-RANCHO-1 or visit our website at www.rancho.org

